

Power; all the prophecies from Divine Understanding; the goodness of the doctrine from Divine Goodness; and the moral character of the penmen from Divine Holiness.

Thus Christianity is built upon four grand pillars, viz: the Power, Understanding, Goodness, and Holiness of God: Divine Power is the source of all the miracles; Divine Understanding, of all the prophecies; Divine Goodness, of the goodness of the doctrine; and Divine Holiness, of the moral character of the penmen.

I beg leave to propose a short, clear, and strong argument, to prove the Divine Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures.

The Bible must be the invention either of good men or angels, bad men or devils, or of God.

1. It could not be the invention of good men or angels, for they neither would nor could make a book, and tell lies all the time they were writing it, saying, Thus saith the Lord, when it was their own invention.

2. It could not be the invention of bad men or devils, for they would not make a book which commands all duty, forbids all sin, and condemns their own souls to hell to all eternity.

3. Therefore, I draw this conclusion, That the Bible must be given by Divine Inspiration.

LETTER OF MRS. SUSANNAH WESLEY, TO HER SON, THE REV. JOHN WESLEY, A.M.

The following Letter on the nature and properties of Love, (says Dr. A. Clarke,) would be a gem even in the best written Treatise on the powers and passions of the human mind. The concluding advice, relative to the mode of treating such matters in public preaching, must interest all those who minister at the altar of the Lord.

"Wroote, May 14, 1727.

"DEAR SON,—The difficulty there is in separating the ideas of things that nearly resemble each other, and whose properties and effects are much the same, has, I believe, induced some to think that the human soul has no passion but love; and that all those passions or affections which we distinguish by the names of hope, fear, joy, &c. are no more than various modes of love. This notion carries some show of reason, though I can't acquiesce in it. I must confess, I never yet met with such an accurate definition of the passion of love, as fully satisfied me. It is, indeed, commonly defined a desire of union with a known or apprehended good. But this directly makes love and desire the same thing; which, on a close inspection, I conceive they are not: for this reason—desire is strongest, and acts most vigorously, when the beloved object is distant, absent, or apprehended unkind or displeased; whereas, when the union is attained, and fruition perfect, complacency, delight, and joy, fill the soul of the lover, while desire lies quiescent; which plainly shews, (at least to me,) that desire of union is an effect of love, and not love itself.

"What, then, is love? or how shall we describe its strange mysterious essence? It is—I do not know what! A powerful something!—source of our joy and grief! Felt and experienced by every one, and yet unknown to all! Nor shall we ever comprehend what it is, till we are united to our first principle, and there read its wondrous nature in the clear mirror of uncreated Love! Till which time it is best to rest satisfied with such apprehensions of its essence as we can collect from our observations of its effects and properties; for other knowledge of it, in our present state, is too high and too wonderful for us—neither can we attain unto it.

"Suffer now a word of advice. However curious you may be in searching into the nature, or in distinguishing the properties, of the passions or virtues of human kind, for your own private satisfaction; be very cautious in giving nice distinctions in public assemblies, for it does not answer the true end of preaching, which is to mend men's lives, and not fill their heads with unprofitable speculations. And after all that can be said, every affection of the soul is better known by experience than any description that can be given of it. An honest man will more easily apprehend what is meant by being zealous for God, and against sin, when he hears what are the properties and effects of true zeal, than the most accurate definition of its essence.

"Dear Son, the conclusion of your letter is very kind. That you were ever dutiful, I very

well know. But I know myself enough to rest satisfied with a moderate degree of your affection. Indeed it would be unjust in me to desire the love of any one. Your prayers I want and wish; nor shall I cease, while I live, to beseech Almighty God to bless you. Adieu."

EPHESUS was the metropolis of Proconsular Asia. This celebrated city, the remains of which give a high idea of its former beauty, extent and magnificence, was situated in that part of Asia which was anciently called Ionia, (but now Naxos,) about five miles from the Ægean Sea, on the sides and at the foot of a range of mountains overlooking a fine plain, that was watered and fertilized by the river Cayster. Ephesus was particularly celebrated for the temple of Diana, a most magnificent and stately edifice, which had been erected at the common expense of the inhabitants of Asia Proper, and was reputed one of the seven wonders of the world. Widely scattered and noble ruins attest the splendour of this edifice, as well as of the theatre mentioned in Acts xix. 31. In the time of St. Paul, this city abounded with orators and philosophers; and its inhabitants, in their Gentile state, were celebrated for their idolatry and skill in magic, as well as for their luxury and lasciviousness. Ephesus is now under the dominion of the Turks, and is in a state of almost total ruin, being reduced to fifteen poor cottages, (erected not exactly on its original site); and its once flourishing church, of which an account is given in our preface to the Epistle to the Ephesians, in October, 1822, was diminished to ten poor Greeks. (Rev. ii. 6.) It is not known from whom the Nicolaitans mentioned in the Epistle to the Ephesian Church, derived their name. They are supposed to have held the opinion, subsequently adopted by the Gnostics, who denied the humanity of Jesus Christ, and the reality of his sufferings in the flesh; and in their practices, which are noticed in Rev. ii. 6, with detestation, they are said to have been singularly profligate and impure. They are supposed to have been alluded to in 2d Peter, ii. and Jude 7-19. In the time of the Romans, Ephesus was the metropolis of Asia.—*Horne.*

ERRATUM.—The following paragraph was, through mistake, omitted by the printer, as concluding the article on Divination, in our last number:—

We have no reason to infer that Joseph practised divination by the cup; although, according to the superstition of those times, supernatural influence might be attributed to his cup. And as the whole transaction related in Gen. xlii. was merely intended to deceive his brethren for a short time, he might as well affect divination by his cup, as affect to believe that they had stolen it.

## ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY.

### CHRISTIAN DISPENSATION.

[CONTINUED.]

WHILE the divine origin of Christianity, and the saving power of the Gospel, were demonstrated by the amazing success which attended the labours of the apostolic preachers of that Gospel among the Gentile nations; the hostility of Satan to the rising and spreading Church, was soon manifested by the persecutions and sufferings to which the Christians were exposed. It is supposed, that during the first three centuries, not less than three millions perished for the name of Jesus.

The first persecutors of Christianity (says Croly) were the Jews. The fear that the new dispensation would supersede their law; and the sublime boldness of the Apostles, who openly charged them with the death of our Lord as a sacrilegious murder, stirred the Sanhedrim to vengeance. Three distinguished servants of the Faith, Stephen, James the son of Zebedee, and James the Just, head of the Church of Jerusalem, were slain, and the Church was altogether dispersed, excepting the Apostles. (Acts viii. 1.)

The scattered Disciples were still pursued. Messengers were sent by the High Priest to the Jews living out of Palestine, to persecute; and they were represented to the proverbial jealousy of Rome as rebels, impatient of her government,

and acknowledging an alien and self-elected sovereign.

The heathen history of those times is imperfect. But it is impossible to doubt that the calumnies of a people, dwelling in every part of the empire, habitually dexterous, and on whom prejudice seems to fix a more inveterate grasp than on any other among mankind, must have prepared their imperial masters for violence against Christianity. The occasion suddenly occurred, and the terrible course of Pagan persecution began.

In the tenth year of Nero, and two years before the commencement of the final war of the Jews, Rome was almost burned to the ground. Of the fourteen quarters of the city, but four remained; multitudes perished. The suspicions of the people were fixed upon the Emperor; and, as the historian remarks, they might be well entitled to charge any atrocity upon the notorious murderer of his mother and his wife. To avert his danger, Nero threw the crime upon the Christians, already obnoxious to Paganism, and amounting to a "great multitude" in Rome.

Tacitus, almost a contemporary, describes their deaths as combining all the forms of horror. "They died in torments, and their torments were embittered by insult and derision. Some were nailed to crosses; others were sewn up in the skins of wild beasts, and exposed to the fury of dogs; others, again, smeared over with combustible materials, were used as torches to illuminate the darkness of the night.

"The gardens of Nero were destined for the melancholy spectacle, which was accompanied with a horse-race, and honoured with the presence of the Emperor, who mingled among the populace in the dress and attitudes of a chariot-eeer."

The agonies of the sacrifice overwhelmed even the national ferocity of the Romans. "The public abhorrence was changed into commiseration, as the opinion grew that those unhappy wretches were sacrificed, not so much to the public welfare, as to the cruelty of a jealous tyrant."

This was the act of an acknowledged lover of blood. But it is too high an honour to the spirit of Paganism to doubt that it was in principle a persecutor. The Pagan, accustomed to the sight of a multitude of idols, might, in general, feel no keen alarm at the increase of their number by the contributions of Egypt or Asia. The line drawn between the ancient idolatries was no abrupt and frowning barrier. The Roman eye saw the religions of the world, like its territory, spread out, an easy level to Roman conquest and association; the same powers of nature, the same poetic fable, often the same heroes, made the mythology of the subject and the master; and the religion of Rome followed the example of its polity, and gave the rights of citizenship to the stranger.

But the spirit only slumbered. It was living in the laws of all Paganism. The introduction of "strange gods" was a matter of public vigilance. The temples of foreign idolaters were sometimes plundered and overthrown; new opinions were visited with the severity of the state. "It is difficult," says Plato, "to attain, and dangerous to publish the knowledge of the true God." In Greece, the fount of religious law to the ancient world, the name of Atheist, or dissident from the popular worship, was ruinous. The fate of Socrates is proverbial. The Athenians burned the books of Protagoras. St. Paul was brought before the Areopagus for preaching "strange gods." (Acts xvii.) Josephus charges the Athenians with merciless severity to those who spoke against their national faith. In the conference between Augustus, Agrippa, and Mæcenas, described by Dion Cassius, Mæcenas declares the received opinion of the sovereign's duty. "Do thou thyself worship the gods, strictly in the manner of the country, and compel others to do so; but those who bring in strange practices in those things, hate and punish."

Judaism, for ages a living testimony against heathenism, had yet seldom attracted persecution; but the essential adaptation of its law to a peculiar people, and its rigid and hermit-like remoteness from general intercourse, had rendered it an object rather of scorn than of alarm. Few things in ancient history are more remarkable than the slight impression made upon the manners or learning of Greece and Rome by Judaism; easy of access as were its Scriptures; close as Judæa was to Europe; curious and magnificent as were its